

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. An authenticating system for determining the authenticity
2 of a product, said system comprising:

3 an authenticator having a processing module storing authenticating
4 data;

5 a product having stored product data;

6 an interface device for extracting the product data from the
7 product, said interface device sending the product data to said
8 authenticator;

9 said processing module comparing the authenticating data to the
10 product data of said product;

11 whereby said authenticator determines that the product is authentic
12 if the product data acceptably compares with the authenticating data.

1 2. The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein the product
2 data is concealed within said product.

1 3. The authenticating system of claim 2 wherein the product
2 data is concealed by providing extraneous data with the product data.

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1 4. The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein said interface
2 device may extract a plurality of different types of data from said
3 product.

1 5. The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein the product
2 data acceptably compares with the authenticating data by comparing a
3 range for which the product data may fall within.

1 6. The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein the product
2 data acceptably compares with the authenticating data by comparing a
3 distinct value for which the product data must attain.

1 7. The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein:
2 said authenticator has an information storage module storing
3 supplemental data;
4 said supplemental data being used in conjunction with the
5 product data to compare with the authenticating data.

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1 8. The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein said
2 authenticator emits a visual signal to indicate that the product data
3 acceptably compares with the authenticating data.

1 9. The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein said
2 authenticator emits an aural signal to indicate that the product data
3 acceptably compares with the authenticating data.

1 10. The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein said
2 authenticator emits a signal to indicate that the product data does not
3 acceptably compare with the authenticating data.

1 11. The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein the
2 authenticator includes means to destroy the authenticating data if the
3 authenticator is opened incorrectly.

1 12. A method of determining an authenticity of a product, said
2 method comprising the steps of:

3 programming an authenticator with authenticating data used to
4 determine the authenticity of the product;

5 extracting product data from the product by an interface device;

6 transmitting the product data to the authenticator;

7 comparing, by the authenticator, the authenticating data with the
8 product data extracted from the product;

9 determining, by the authenticator, if the product data acceptably
10 compares with the authenticating data.

1 13. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of
2 claim 12 wherein the step of programming an authenticator includes
3 storing supplementary data within the authenticator, said supplementary
4 data being added with the product data to compare with the
5 authenticating data.

1 14. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of
2 claim 12 further comprising, after the step of determining, by the
3 authenticator, if the product data acceptably compares with the
4 authenticating data, the step of sending a signal to indicate the
5 authenticity of the product.

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1 15. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of
2 claim 12 wherein the step of determining, by the authenticator, if the
3 product data acceptably compares with the authenticating data includes
4 determining if the product data falls within a specific range of values of
5 authenticating data.

1 16. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of
2 claim 12 wherein the authenticating data is a distinct value.

1 17. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of
2 claim 12 further comprising, before the step of programming an
3 authenticator, the step of concealing product data within the product.

1 18. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of
2 claim 17 wherein the step of concealing product data includes providing
3 extraneous data to conceal the product data.

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1 19. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of
2 claim 12 further comprising, after the step of programming an
3 authenticator, the step of destroying the authenticating data if the
4 authenticator is incorrectly opened.

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